

Abstract of the Disclosure:

A method and a device for controlling the temperature of an NO_x accumulator to purify the exhaust gas stream of an internal combustion engine, can be used especially for diesel or lean-burn engines. A heat flow is carried off from the exhaust gas stream upstream of the NO_x accumulator in the exhaust gas line depending on the operating state of the internal combustion engine, so that a maximum temperature of the NO_x accumulator is not exceeded and more particularly so that a specified temperature range is maintained. In order to obtain a minimum operating temperature of the NO_x accumulator, the internal combustion engine is operated at least at an air-fuel ratio of $\lambda \leq 1$ until the minimum operating temperature is reached.